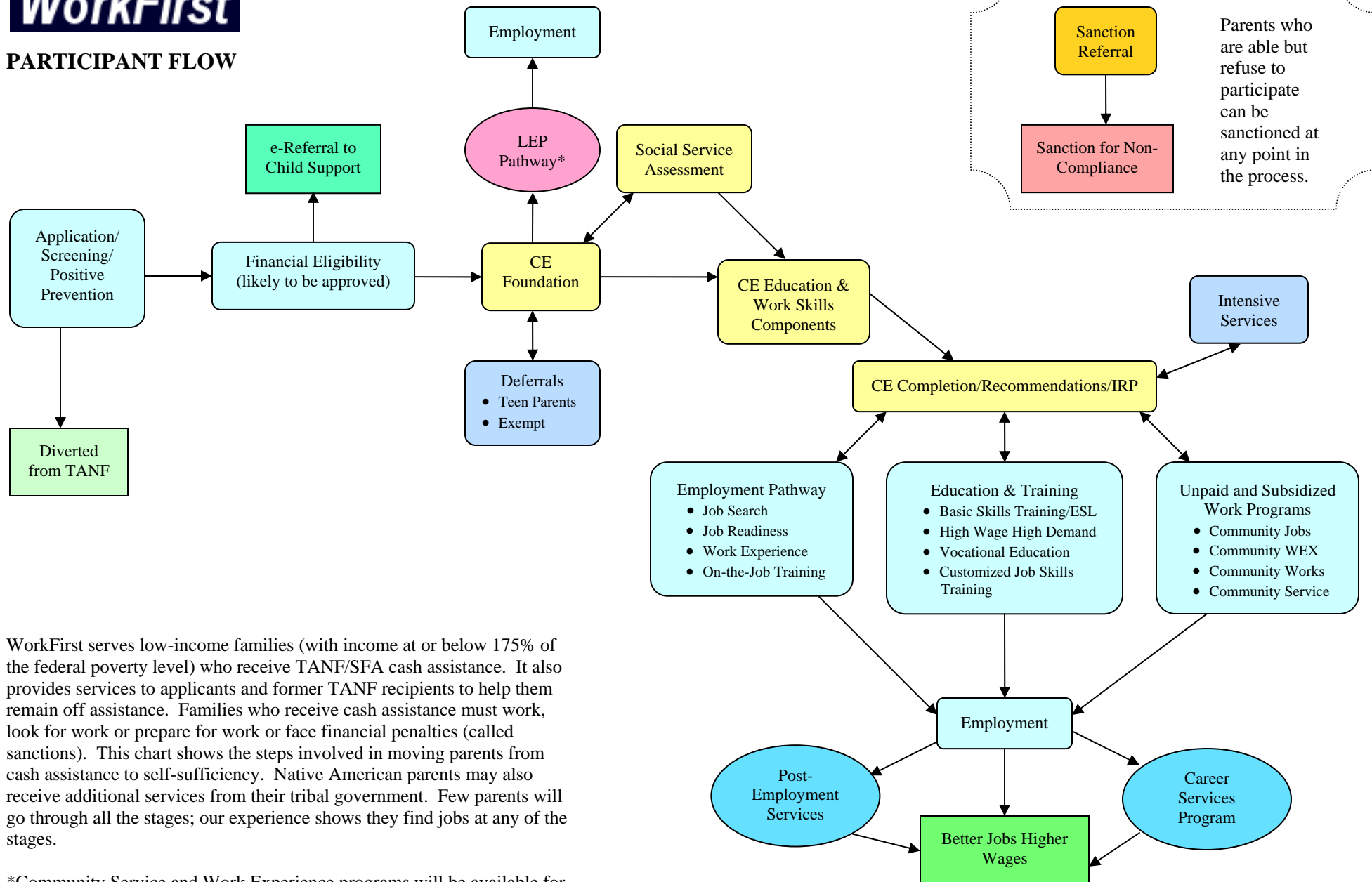




PARTICIPANT FLOW



WorkFirst serves low-income families (with income at or below 175% of the federal poverty level) who receive TANF/SFA cash assistance. It also provides services to applicants and former TANF recipients to help them remain off assistance. Families who receive cash assistance must work, look for work or prepare for work or face financial penalties (called sanctions). This chart shows the steps involved in moving parents from cash assistance to self-sufficiency. Native American parents may also receive additional services from their tribal government. Few parents will go through all the stages; our experience shows they find jobs at any of the stages.

*Community Service and Work Experience programs will be available for ESL clients 7/1/07

Typical WorkFirst Flow

1. **Application, Screening and Positive Prevention Services:** Upon an application for cash assistance, DSHS provides information about WorkFirst expectations and links families to other services that can help meet their emergency needs. These services include:
 - Diversion cash assistance
 - Basic Food, including Transitional Food Assistance
 - Medical assistance
 - Child support
 - Subsidized child care
 - Unemployment benefits
 - Connection to employment services
 - Other community resources such as housing, food banks, energy assistance, etc.
2. **Financial Eligibility Determination:** DSHS determines eligibility for food, medical and cash assistance. Those who are considered “likely to be approved” are referred to a case manager to begin the Comprehensive Evaluation process.
3. **Comprehensive Evaluation Foundation:** The foundation consists of questions designed to learn more about a parent’s readiness for an employment plan and ability to succeed in the workplace. This information adds context to the rest of the Comprehensive Evaluation. During the foundation, some parents and caregivers may diverge from the typical flow:
 - **Exempt:** DSHS may determine some people exempt from WorkFirst activities, although they may volunteer to participate if they wish. Exempt categories include those with severe and chronic disabilities, caregivers who are at least 55 years old, and those caring for a child with special needs or a disabled family member. Parents with a newborn under four months of age are also exempt from activities.
 - **LEP Pathway:** DSHS will refer limited-English proficient (LEP) parents to LEP contractors for a language-appropriate Comprehensive Evaluation Assessment, job competencies, ESL, and barrier resolution.
 - **Teen Parents (Minors):** DSHS works with minor parents and teens to complete their high school education.
4. **Social Services Assessment:** Conducted by a DSHS social worker, the social services assessment will occur for teen parents, parents who are pregnant or have issues such as family violence or substance abuse. It is considered part of the Comprehensive Evaluation.
5. **Comprehensive Evaluation – Education & Work Skills Components:** ESD conducts a comprehensive work skills assessment to help parents identify their skills, interests and career choices. In addition, the local community and technical college conducts an education and basic skills evaluation. The work skill and education evaluations, as well as the foundation and social services assessment, serve as building blocks for creating an employment plan that lays out steps a parent will follow to move into the appropriate Employment Pathway.
6. **CE Completion/Recommendations/Individual Responsibility Plans (IRP):** Based on the Comprehensive Evaluation Employment Plan, DSHS will refer parents to job preparation, job search, education and training (including customized jobs skills training, vocational education, adult basic education, and English-as-a-Second-Language classes), Community Jobs (job opportunities where participants work 20 hours per week in temporary paid positions), or other employment-related activities such as work experience. Parents are likely to move between these activities (i.e., from job search to education to community programs) as they move through their individualized employment plans.
7. **Intensive Services:** DSHS may temporarily defer a parent’s work requirement while the family deals with family violence, substance abuse, homelessness or applies for SSI benefits.
8. **Employment:** The goal of WorkFirst participation is full-time, unsubsidized employment.
9. **Post-Employment Services:** DSHS services include child care assistance, medical, Basic Food, and support services. ESD offers services to help parents keep jobs, and job referrals and college referrals to help them find better jobs. The community and technical college system offers help with assessing and providing training that can lead to higher wages, as well as some wage progression services.
10. **Career Services Program:** Beginning July 1, 2007, parents who leave WorkFirst and are working 30 or more hours per week will be eligible for up to six months of cash benefits and work advancement and retention services offered by the Employment Security Department.
11. **Sanction:** The goal of the WorkFirst program is for each parent to participate fully in work or an activity designed to maximize their self-sufficiency. If a parent refuses to meet the requirements of their individual plan, however, a sanction penalty (40 percent grant reduction) will be instituted. The sanction can be removed after four weeks of participation. Beginning September 1, 2006, parents refusing to participate in agreed-to activities for longer than six consecutive months will face termination of their cash assistance.